

City of Marina

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SHERRI L. PEDERSEN
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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

April 26, 2001

The Honorable Robert O'Farrell
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Monterey County
P.O. Box 1819
Salinas, CA 93902

Dear Judge O'Farrell:

Following is the response of the Marina City Council to the findings and recommendations of the 2000 Monterey County Grand Jury regarding domestic violence.

FINDINGS:

1. All 12 police stations, as well as the Sheriff's Department, were in general compliance with the 1996 Grand Jury recommendation that domestic violence information be readily available. However, the type of materials offered varied widely at each location, as did the level of accessibility visitors had to the information.

Response: We agree with this finding.

2. Based on data gathered by the 2000 Grand Jury, a relatively small number of citizens picked up domestic violence materials at police stations. Walking into a police station may be intimidating to many individuals who are in need of information. The Grand Jurors were further informed by most jurisdictions that officers responding to a domestic violence call always carry written information about a victim's legal rights and available resources for assistance. Unfortunately, by the time an officer responds to a domestic violence call, the brochure provided at the incident is after the fact.

Response: We agree with this finding.

3. Some smaller community police stations and the Sheriff's sub-stations do not have seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day access to provide availability of materials. One small Monterey Peninsula police station provided 24-hour-a-day access to domestic violence materials through a covered receptacle located outside the station. Civilian staff at the station reported this receptacle is replenished more frequently than the one inside.

Response: We agree in part but cannot answer for other agencies operations.

4. Not all law enforcement agencies claimed to have a special unit or a specific officer in charge of domestic violence, but each indicated that most officers were trained in domestic violence issues.

Response: We agree with this finding.

5. Children of all ages from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds may routinely witness domestic violence in their homes. The California Attorney General's Office publication, "Domestic Violence Handbook - A Survivor's Guide" (p. 7), reports that, "While domestic violence is not hereditary, it has been shown to be learned behavior and is often handed down from one generation to the next." Physical assault within the family can become accepted as a normal part of life and may not even be recognized as a crime by some men and women. Children from these homes need help in developing life management skills that may prevent them from becoming abusers or the abused in their teen or adult life.

Response: We agree with this finding.

6. Section 1 of the Monterey County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Resolution No. 96-357 establishes a membership requirement of 17 members. The committee is composed of members representing the legal and law enforcement communities, social services and related not-for-profit resource agencies, the medical community, and five Monterey County Board of Supervisors' at-large appointees. There was no specific education community component in the mix.

Response: No response required.

7. The Correctional Training Facility at Soledad donated the first printing of the domestic violence information brochure created by the Council. At that time, the brochures were distributed in quantity to law enforcement agencies and related non-profit service providers. In addition to an initial stock of brochures, each agency was to be provided a camera-ready master to be used to replenish the supply as needed within each individual organization. The Coordinating Council is a non-funded agency and, as such, has no budget for printing and distributing brochures on a regular basis. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of each distributing agency to provide copies of the brochure.

Response: We agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Each police station and the Sheriff's Department review its policies and procedures to ensure the availability of, and easy access to, domestic violence information for the general public. Further efforts be made to standardize the compliance criteria among all law enforcement departments to meet the requirements of the Penal Code to a far greater extent.

Response: We agree with this recommendation.

2. Law enforcement agencies, domestic violence resource agencies, and the Board of Supervisors through the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council of Monterey County; look at additional sites to distribute domestic violence information. To the degree possible, considering resources available, the 2000 Grand Jury supports increased effort in making information available at locations such as walk-in clinics, drug store pharmacy counters, post offices, libraries, and other suitable venues visited by local citizens on a regular basis. Such availability could increase the probability of getting information into the right hands before serious domestic violence problems develop or escalate.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The Marina Department of Public Safety will make available to the public, domestic violence information beyond what we currently provide, as recommended by the Grand Jury by July 31, 2001.

3. Police stations that do not have 24-hour inside access to available materials provide an outside receptacle such as a metal box or protected display rack clearly marked to contain domestic violence information. As some may feel too intimidated to enter the police station to request information, an outside container may provide increased access to all segments of society.

Response: We disagree with this recommendation in that such a receptacle would be subject to theft and vandalism. The area in front of the public safety station after normal business hours has minimal pedestrian traffic. We feel the public would be better served by making this information available in other areas of the city.

4. While not all police stations are large enough to have a specific unit dedicated to domestic violence, one officer be designated and trained as the expert on domestic violence. Such an expert could oversee ongoing training of the police force and offer detailed attention to the important issue of domestic violence.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The Department of Public Safety has a dedicated Community Services Specialist who is the point of contact for domestic violence victims and follow up. The public safety officers have received and continue to receive extensive training on domestic violence. Domestic violence training for all employees is scheduled by the department's training coordinator on an annual basis.

5. Existing programs that educate children about domestic violence be emphasized and expanded to protect and reach more of them at an earlier age to help break the cycle of violence. Programs that focus on strengthening interpersonal relationships and developing a capacity for tolerance and respect for self and others are needed at every grade level within our community schools. The 2000 Grand Jury further recommends law enforcement officers use their interactions with school-age children as opportunities to include advice and counsel on the subject of domestic violence.

Response: The City of Marina agrees with this recommendation and interacts with school age children through the Public Safety DARE program and School Resource Officer.

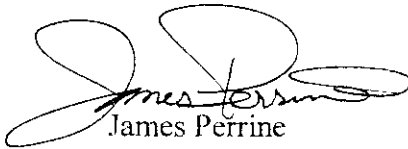
6. The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Resolution be amended to add a representative from the education community.

Response: No response required.

7. Each police station, Sheriff's Department and sub-stations, and all other agencies providing the Council's domestic violence brochure as a resource verify the availability of an adequate supply. In addition, each site should determine that a master copy was, in fact, received, is available, and if not, contact the Council to obtain a new master to ensure a future supply of brochures.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The Public Safety Department will maintain a master copy on file and has an adequate supply of brochures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Perrine", with a large, stylized initial "J" and "P".

James Perrine
Mayor
City of Marina

Cc: City Council
City Manager
Public Safety Director
FILE: 2000 Monterey County Grand Jury – Domestic Violence